

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Office Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-12, 14, 15, 17-19, and 21-27 are now pending. Of these, claims 1-11, 14, and 22-27 have been withdrawn from further consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention. Of the claims not withdrawn, claims 12, 15, and 21 are independent. Claims 13, 16, and 20 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 12, 15, and 21 have been amended. Support for the amendments can be found throughout the originally-filed disclosure, including, for example, in Figures 6B and 8, and at page 28, line 6 through page 29, line 23, and page 51, line 19 through page 54, line 13 of the specification. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the amendments do not include new matter.

Claims 20 and 21 are rejected in the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Without necessarily conceding the propriety of this rejection, claim 20 has been cancelled, thereby obviating the rejection with respect to this claim. Further, claim 21 has been amended as suggested in the Office Action, namely to recite a “computer readable medium storing a computer executable program.” Accordingly, Applicant submits that the Section 101 rejections have been overcome and should be withdrawn.

Claims 12, 13, and 15-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshida (Japanese Publication No. 2002-016812) in view of Suzuki (U.S. Patent No. 5,289,570).

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections. Nevertheless, without conceding the propriety of the rejections and in order to expedite prosecution, Applicant has amended independent claims 12, 15, and 21 to clarify features of the invention not disclosed or suggested by the cited references. To this end, Applicant submits that the claimed invention is patentably distinguishable from the cited references for at least the following reasons.

Amended independent claim 12 recites an image forming apparatus comprising, inter alia, a first setting unit configured to set a number of data arranged in a first direction independently of a number of data arranged in a second direction based on a user instruction, as well as a second setting unit configured to set a number of data arranged in the second direction independently of a number of data arranged in the first direction based on a user instruction. Amended independent claim 15 recites a layout method and amended independent claim 21 recites a computer readable medium storing a computer executable program, both of which include first and second setting steps analogous to the first and second setting units recited in amended independent claim 12. Applicant submits that the cited references fail to disclose or suggest at least these features of the invention.

The Office Action cites Yoshida as disclosing an apparatus and method that includes some of the features of the claimed invention, including an image repeat function,

wherein layout processing is performed to arrange plural same data in first and second directions on a recording paper.

In Applicant's view, Yoshida discloses a facsimile apparatus that includes a functionality to adjust sizes of received images relative to the size of recording paper. For example, the apparatus of Yoshida is configured such that if an image of size A6 is received by the apparatus, two records of A6 image data are repetitively recorded in a main-scan direction and a sub-scan direction on A4 sized recording paper. See, e.g., Figure 14 and the corresponding description in the specification of the reference. As another example, when an image size of A5 is received, the apparatus of Yoshida repetitively records two A5 image data in the main-scan direction on one A4 sized recording paper. See, e.g., Figure 15 and the corresponding description in the specification in the reference. As such, the apparatus of Yoshida is configured to set received image data on recording paper based on the size of the data and the size of the recoding data. Yoshida does not disclose or suggest setting a number of data in directions based on a user instruction. As such, Yoshida does not disclose or suggest the first and second setting units or steps recited amended independent claims 12, 15, and 21.

Applicant further submits that the secondary citation to Suzuki fails to cure the deficiencies of Yoshida.

In Applicant's view, Suzuki discloses a digital electrophotographic copying machine that reads a plurality of sheets of an original document, and outputs the image on a sheet of paper. See, e.g., Figure 1b, and the corresponding description in the specification

of the reference. That is, in Suzuki, the number of images output on a sheet of paper is determined based on the number of sheets of an original document. Suzuki does not disclose or suggest setting a number of data in directions based on a user instruction. As such, Suzuki does not disclose or suggest the first and second setting units or steps recited amended independent claims 12, 15, and 21.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that Yoshida and Suzuki do not disclose or suggest the invention recited in amended independent claims 12, 15, and 21.

The other claims are allowable by virtue of their dependency and in their own right by reciting further features of the invention. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the application are earnestly solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continued to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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